

## REMARKS

Claims 77-79 have been amended to define more precisely that the "axle is arranged in the securing device and can be rotated around its longitudinal axis without transversal movement relative to the securing device."

The Examiner considers US 6,290,270 B1 to Spiessl (hereinafter referred to as Spiessl '270) to disclose that an axle 22 is rotatably arranged in a securing device 10.

Axle 22 according to Spiessl '270 is arranged on a lever 12. Lever 12 is rotatably arranged in securing device 10. Rotating lever 12 also moves axle 22 with respect to securing device 10.

To our understanding, the Examiner considers such a movement of axle 22 due to a rotation of lever 12 to represent a rotation of axle 22 relative to securing device 10. Applicants assume that the Examiner, starting from this reading of Spiessl '270, construes Spiessl '270 to disclose that axle 22 is rotatably arranged in securing device 10.

In order to delineate claim 77 over Spiessl '270 in that regard, claim 77 has been amended to define that the "axle is arranged in the securing device and can be rotated around its longitudinal axis without transversal movement relative to the securing device."

Such an arrangement and movement is not disclosed by Spiessl '270 for axle 22 and securing device 10. Thus, claim 77 is not anticipated by Spiessl '270 and, therefore, patentable over this prior art. This also applies to claim 79, which has been also amended as claim 77.

The Examiner rejects independent claims 77, 78 and 79 as being rendered obvious by US 4, 997,221 to Tölle (hereinafter referred to as Tölle '221) in view of US

2,800,128 to Chesser (hereinafter referred to as Chesser '128) and US 5,931,554 to Koopman (hereinafter referred to as Koopman '554).

Tölle '221 relates to a locking device for vehicle doors.

In contrast thereto, present claims 77, 78 and 79 define a door lock for a washing machine, dishwasher or dryer.

This difference is also seen by the Examiner. However, the Examiner does not consider this difference as having patentable weight.

Chesser '128 and Koopman '554 disclose devices for an oven and a refrigerator, respectively, which devices would be comparable with the device according to Tölle '221. Starting therefrom, in the Examiner's view, a skilled person would have obtained the devices according to present claims 77, 78 and 79 in obvious manner on the basis of Tölle '221 in view of Chesser '128 and/or Koopman '554.

However, it has to be noted that neither Chesser '128 nor Koopman '554 discloses a door lock for a washing machine, dish washer or dryer. Chesser '128 discloses a hinge for an oven door. Koopman '554 discloses also a hinge, here in form of a hinge having a door stop function for a door of a refrigerator.

As a result, neither Chesser '128 nor Koopman '554 includes any disclosure concerning a door lock for a household appliance and, particularly, not even a single reference to a door lock of a washing machine, dish washer or dryer.

Why the skilled person would have been motivated by disclosure relating to hinges for oven and refrigerator doors to use the device according to Tölle '221 in the field of household appliances in general and, particularly, for washing machines, dish washers and driers, cannot be reinacted.

Even assuming the skilled person being aware of Tölle '221 would have considered Chesser '128 and/or Koopman '554, the devices according to claims 77, 78 and 79 are not obtained.

A combination of Tölle '221 and Chesser '128 would result in a device for an oven door.

A combination of Tölle '221 and Koopman '554 would result in a device for a refrigerator door.

None of the combinations leads to an application for a washing machine, dishwasher or dryer.

Moreover, it has to be considered that claims 77 and 79 define that the axle is rotatably arranged in the securing device.

In contrast thereto, axle 11 according to Tölle '221 is not rotatably arranged but stationary (Tölle '221: e.g. column 3, lines 62-64).

As a result, claims 77, 78 and 79 are not rendered obvious by the above discussed prior art and, therefore, patentable over this prior art.

It could be stated that the skilled person would try to reduce friction in a door lock in the case large forces are acting on the door lock and internal components thereof (e.g. a door lock for a vehicle door).

However, door locks for household appliances are subjected to relatively small forces, which are acting on internal components and which have been generated and/or overcome by the user for opening and closing the household appliance's door.

Therefore, the skilled person would not have actually considered household appliance door locks to require a reduction of friction. As a result, it was per se not

obvious to contemplate to reduce friction in a door lock for a washing machine, dishwasher or dryer.

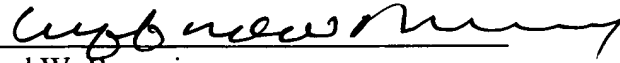
Further, the skilled person is aware of the fact that door locks for household appliances must fulfil strict cost requirements, i.e. such door locks have to be inexpensive.

In line therewith, the skilled person will avoid any modification of a door lock for a household appliance requiring further manufacturing steps and further components. This is particularly true for measures relating to a reduction of friction because the skilled person would not consider friction of such a door lock to be relevant.

Thus, the teaching of the present invention is contradictory to the skilled person's thinking and, therefore, not obvious per se.

Moreover, it can be noted that door locks according to the present invention lead to a reduction of friction in an extend that could not and was not expected. This surprising effect, which is illustrated in figures 2a and 2b of the application documents, can be considered to also demonstrate that the present invention is not rendered obvious.

Respectfully submitted,

By:   
Clifford W. Browning  
Reg. No. 32,201  
Woodard, Emhardt et al. LLP  
Bank One Center/Tower  
111 Monument Circle, Suite 3700  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-5137  
(317) 634-3456

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